

*With the Author's Compliments*

REMARKS

ON THE SOCIAL EVIL,

WITH A VIEW TO THE

CHECKING OF ITS CONSEQUENCES,

ETC. ETC.

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IN the year 1860, in a paper containing "Observations on the Mortality, &c., of the Troops at Aldershot," which I had the honour of submitting to Lieut.-Gen. Knollys, then Commanding Division, Camp Aldershot, I stated, as the following extract will show, that :—"The average *daily* percentage of sick to strength, for the year 1859, was 5·6 ; the former being 812, and the latter 14,256 ; that the number of rheumatic cases treated in the camp may, at first sight, appear large, but that very many of these were not labouring under true rheumatism, a considerable portion being affected with rheumatoid pains, the result of syphilitic constitutional taint ; that the great prevalence of venereal disease—the cases numbering for the year 1859, 6,621—was, without doubt, the original cause of many other affections which appear upon the face of the sick returns ; that the women infesting the neighbourhood of the camp were lodged in many of the public-houses in its environs, and were of the lowest description ; that it would be very desirable, and would tend much to improve the sanitary

condition of the camp, at least as far as syphilitic ailments are concerned, if the authorities of the different parishes would prosecute the owners of such public-houses as could be proved to have harboured prostitutes ; that this could be done, having obtained evidence from such men as had contracted disease from cohabitation with women in such houses ; that, from my experience as an Army Medical Officer, I was led to the conviction, that four-fifths of the mortality in the British army was owing, directly or indirectly, to syphilis ; and that unless some plan were devised to deter soldiers from exposing themselves to such contagion, I feared there could be little diminution in the numbers of those who would become diseased, and scarcely any improvement, on this point, in the sanitary condition of the army."

It is stated in 'The United Service Gazette' of April 9th, 1864 :—"From Medical and military returns, we are enabled to show that from one removable cause of sickness alone (namely, syphilis), four or five regiments were permanently disabled from duty ; whilst even when the invalids had recovered, so much had their constitutions been injured by the ordeal through which they had passed that there was nothing left for commanding officers but to discharge them, as unfit for the service."

Many there are who will object to the plans we are about to suggest in this paper, for the alleviation of the great evil which exists amongst us ; and, without doubt the opinions of such objectors are worthy of every respect and deference, because they are held on what are considered to be just grounds, and are honest in their intentions.

But opinions are not arguments ; and however just they may seem to the holders of them, however honest they are

n purpose, however upright in intention, they cannot be accepted as legitimate or binding, since they offer no means of preventing an origination of the disease, a further spread of it when originated, a staying of the fearful ravages it commits, nor even a tentative effort at eradication—since, in a word, they fail to meet the exigencies of the case. On this account, therefore, they must not be heard with that attention which would exclude from notice propositions that have for their object not so much an eradication as an amelioration.

The lesson taught us by past ages is, that wherever men are collected, especially in large numbers, prostitution will—we had almost said must—exist ; now, since we cannot prevent the offence, nor wholly banish the offenders from our camps and our ranks in civil life, we must adopt those means which are actually at our command.

We admire the principles, we reverence, in the highest signification of the word, the tenets of religion upon which are based moral objections to the plans about to be proposed ; we bow in sincere and humble adoration before Him who has said “Thou shalt not do evil that good may come ;” and we render all holy veneration to this command, which we strenuously contend we are not violating when we urge the adoption of those proposals which we submit for consideration.

Wherever men are aggregated, without the most powerful restraining influences to govern them, the offence which leads to the disease will be committed ; nay, more, from our own experience we can state that when men are isolated from the opposite sex, crimes are committed more disgusting and revolting to our nature, and that seem greater violation of Nature’s laws, which, however, are not so in

reality ; but which, physically speaking, reduce the man to greater helplessness, and in a number of instances have apparently degraded him the more morally.

We must not be misunderstood. We are not advocating the crime of fornication ; we are not even trying to excuse that we are bound to condemn ; we offer no extenuation for its commission, nor any exculpation for those guilty of it, for we are well aware that when the Divine edict went forth against the committal of this act, and so constituted it sin, a power, natural or superhuman, was at the same time given, which, if exercised, would enable the unlawful passions to be ruled and overcome, and those desires to be controlled which, pronounced by a pure and holy Deity to be offensive to Him, are therefore sinful in their indulgence.

It is our duty to fight, not with imaginary positions, but with circumstances as we find them.

We can never, even by the most rigid system of discipline, prevent this crime ; not all the restraint of arms, both civil and military, can keep men from pursuing the bent of their desires ; unless, indeed, we bind them hand and foot or strengthen their minds with those principles which will make them to abhor the crime at the same time that we impart to them strength to resist its commission. Now, we cannot bind men as we would the veriest malefactors ; nor can we impose upon all the constraining influence of religion, since all will not accept it as the rule of their lives.

Moreover, it is our opinion that we cannot *eradicate* this disease from amongst us. We are too well acquainted with human nature to suppose it will cease to err ; we know that sin must and will abound, while we retain our present con-

dition, that sin and human nature are inseparable, and that the consequences of sin, as inseparable from the sin itself, are inevitable.

We must deal with this malady in its every bearing as we find it, and must not allow ourselves to be carried away with any Utopian ideas. We find an evil, we trace it to its cause, but we are powerless, utterly powerless, in every sense of the word, to remove either the evil itself or the cause of that evil ; it follows, then, as a matter of course, that we cannot remove the *wages* of this great crime ; and therefore it behoves us to address ourselves, not to that we cannot effect, but to that we can accomplish, namely, the *amelioration* of conditions which actually exist.

"We find," says the 'United Service Gazette' of April 9th, 1864, "that, amongst our rank and file, the existence of an individual with untainted blood is a rarity, and that there are more discharges taking place in consequence of men having been rendered wholly unfit for duty by their profligacy, than from any other causes."

The men so discharged have been for some time under pay, have been fed, clothed, trained for useful purposes by the Government, and that, too, at no small expense ; but just as their training is accomplished and they are prepared by that training for the field and for all the active duties of the soldier, they are rendered unfit for active service, or placed entirely *hors de combat* by the ravages committed upon their health by this disease, or by the effects of treatment and disease combined.

There is one means of propagating this disease which cannot be overlooked, and to which we shall make allusion. Troops are garrisoned in a town ; the members of them become acquainted with the people, and are admitted into

social converse with their families ; attachments are formed ; the troops are ordered away to a camp, or to another town ; the young girls, who have become attached to some of the men, leave their homes, their parents, and their friends, to follow the soldier whom they love ; they follow him ; they are denied admission into the camp ; they are cast off by their soldier-lover, or are seduced by him, and then spurned and degraded. In many instances, these poor girls are of such tender years, as to be mere children—children in years, children in experience, but soon to become children of disgrace and of the lowest infamy. Homeless, friendless, houseless, moneyless, betrayed and rejected, seduced and forsaken, perishing from want of food and that good advice which might reclaim them and lead them back into the paths whence they have strayed, they fall into companionship with the utterly abandoned, become an easy prey to vice and every form of corruption, and, giving themselves up to be the devotees of iniquity, they in turn become nuclei for sin and centres of contagion.

We shall give a brief illustration of the camp-life of the miserable :—Not admitted within the camp precincts, she takes shelter in the hedges and ditches adjoining ; shelter it can scarce be called. Here, however, she spends her time day and night, and yields herself up to every kind of reckless abandonment and licentious debauchery ; when sick she goes to the workhouse, and should she be recovered it is too frequently only to return to her life of infamy and crime.

And these are the women with whom our soldiers hold carnal converse ; these the sources of disease whence emanates the deadly poison which destroys our young men even in the flower of their age and decimates our camps and



barracks when *they are, in every other sanitary point of view, as perfect as camps and barracks could be rendered*; these are the plague-spots in the midst of health, living masses of deadliest corruption, whose very breath is destruction and pestilence; these, these are they whom we allow to prowl around our soldiers, excite their worst passions, and to open their lascivious arms to embrace them; and, as the Egyptian Queen clasped the Roman Triumvir to his destruction, or the Iron Figure of the Inquisition the unhappy victim, they embrace their lovers only to destroy them.

For the sake of these poor women themselves, for the sake of our young men and soldiers, and of society at large, legal measures must be taken; *acts of Parliament* must be passed relative to the arresting of this disease; and these acts must be enforced with the utmost stringency.

We would propose the following measures; and first, as regards the men:—That they should be encouraged to marry early. This might be effected by removing all obstacles to marriage, and by seeking to make the wife and children as comfortable as possible.

The wife and children, when it is at all in the power of the authorities, should be allowed to accompany the soldier, and *should be conveyed along with him at the expense of the Government*; that, when it is not practicable for the children to accompany him, the most strenuous efforts should be made to send his wife with him.

The wife should be encouraged to accompany her husband by being provided with comfortable accommodation, either in the barracks (the plan to be preferred), or outside them in Government houses set apart for this purpose.

That there should be regular and strict medical examinations made of every soldier twice in each week.

That the soldier be held responsible for being drunk *when off duty* as well as when on duty, and if seen to be drunk should be at once brought home by his comrades ; and that, should he prove refractory, and not allow himself to be led or carried home, it should be made obligatory upon his comrades to at once give intimation to the guard.

That amusements, physical and mental, should be provided for the soldier, and that it should enter into part of his training to be instructed in at least the simple elements of education.

That ablutions of the entire body should be more frequent, and the places for such ablutions be more private ; that non-commissioned officers be appointed as inspectors, and be responsible for the carrying out of this regulation.

That men, immediately on finding themselves diseased, or suspecting the existence of any such disease, should present themselves before the medical officers for inspection ; and if any such disease were present, should be required to give up the address where it was contracted, as well as to point out the name of the woman who was the source of the contagion.

That regimental orders should be issued prohibiting any soldier from entering the house where such disease was taken, and that a heavy punishment, to be rigidly carried out, should be attached to any violation of such regimental orders.

That if a comrade or comrades be known to any one soldier, or to any number of soldiers, to have violated such orders, said soldiers be held equally culpable with the actual violator, unless they give up his name to the proper military authorities, having first warned him of his breach of discipline ; and finally, that it be laid upon the honou

of every soldier to strictly carry out these regulations, and assist the authorities in the discharge of their duties.

Concerning the women we would say :—That they should not be allowed to be free agents, inasmuch as being diseased, and likely to communicate disease, they are public nuisances ; or even when free from disease, being at any moment, from the nature of their occupation, likely to become diseased and originators of disease, they are to be viewed in the same light—that is, as public nuisances, detrimental to the weal of the community at large.

To this it will be objected, that ours being a free country, we cannot impose any such restraint upon a subject. Were this so, we can only say that it would be a false kind of freedom, and would not in the cases of other diseases, infectious or contagious, be tolerated by the masses, since it would be a protecting of one to the injury of many, and would be, therefore, monstrously unjust ; but we deny that such is the spirit of our laws, and our denial is substantiated by reference to analogical instances. Is the baker allowed with impunity to sell bread adulterated in such a manner as to prove prejudicial to the public health ? or the butcher to vend, or even expose for sale, meat which, if received in exchange for money and partaken of, would gender disease, and tend to shorten life ? Is it not made incumbent upon householders, landlord or tenant, to remove any source of malarial, contagion, infection, or anything likely to cause deterioration of public health ? Are parents free agents in the matter of vaccinating their children ? Are they not punishable by law if they omit to have this duty performed—a duty they owe not to their children alone, but to the State at large ? Assuredly there is not that freedom of which some in their ignorance of the spirit of our consti-

tution make a boast—namely, freedom of one subject to the detriment of all others ; such freedom, we again repeat, is wholly foreign to our ideas of liberty, and incompatible with our legal enactments.

No permanent good, we fear, can arise from mere bye-laws or police regulations ; it will require an act of Parliament to check the spread of this formidable disease ; and this act, when passed, will need to be executed with the utmost rigour in order to effect any diminution in the numbers of the diseased, or unless it be meant that the act itself should be a mere form. Such an act might not be inappropriately termed the “Prostitution Act.”

We shall give a few headings of clauses which such a Bill should contain :—

First, there must be a full control of the authorities appointed for the inspection of prostitutes and brothels : secondly, officers with special charges : thirdly, registration of all women—name, age, personal appearance, occupation (independent of prostitution), family, native country, residence—all being entered in registry books and also upon a ticket which should be given to each woman and which she should be compelled to produce when it may be required by the authorities : fourthly, that all women be examined at least once in the week ; no excuse being taken for an examination not being allowed : fifthly, that each ticket of registration contain all the regulations regarding prostitution, and all the above entries concerning the women individually, with any further entries that may seem fit to the authorities to be made from time to time ; also, the condition of the women on last medical examination be specially noted with any comments the medical attendant may think fit to append : sixthly, an order against her changing her resi-

lence, or being absent for any longer period than three days without the written permission of the inspector, or of the medical superintendent : seventhly, no lounging about or congregating in the streets or the public-houses or in the theatres, nor any attempt at plying her trade in the streets or in any other public places : nor, eighthly, be permitted to stand at the windows or doors of houses for the purpose of attracting visitors ; nor should any permission be granted her to be out after nightfall : ninthly, a heavy penalty for drunkenness ; for indecency in language, dress, or in any other way : tenthly, severe punishment of women who are not registered, and who, when registered but diseased, continue to ply their trade : eleventhly, a sufficient number of hospitals for the reception of such diseased persons, and an immediate admission into hospital granted them : twelfth, inspectors, &c., to be paid *by the tax levied upon prostitutes and brothels*.

As regards the houses, we would say :—Every house should be registered ; the ticket of registry to be shown whenever desired by the authorities ; severe penalties for all non-registered houses ; keepers of registered houses to be held responsible for the freedom from disease of their *employées* and to be heavily fined when it is proved that any woman in any such houses shall have communicated infection ; keepers immediately to send to hospital any woman diseased, or, at least, to give notice of such disease, and prevent said woman from having connection ; that each house of this character should bear upon it a particular mark betokening its character.

In the vicinity of each camp or barrack there should be a sufficient number of lock hospitals, and such hospitals should be under the charge of the *military* authorities ;

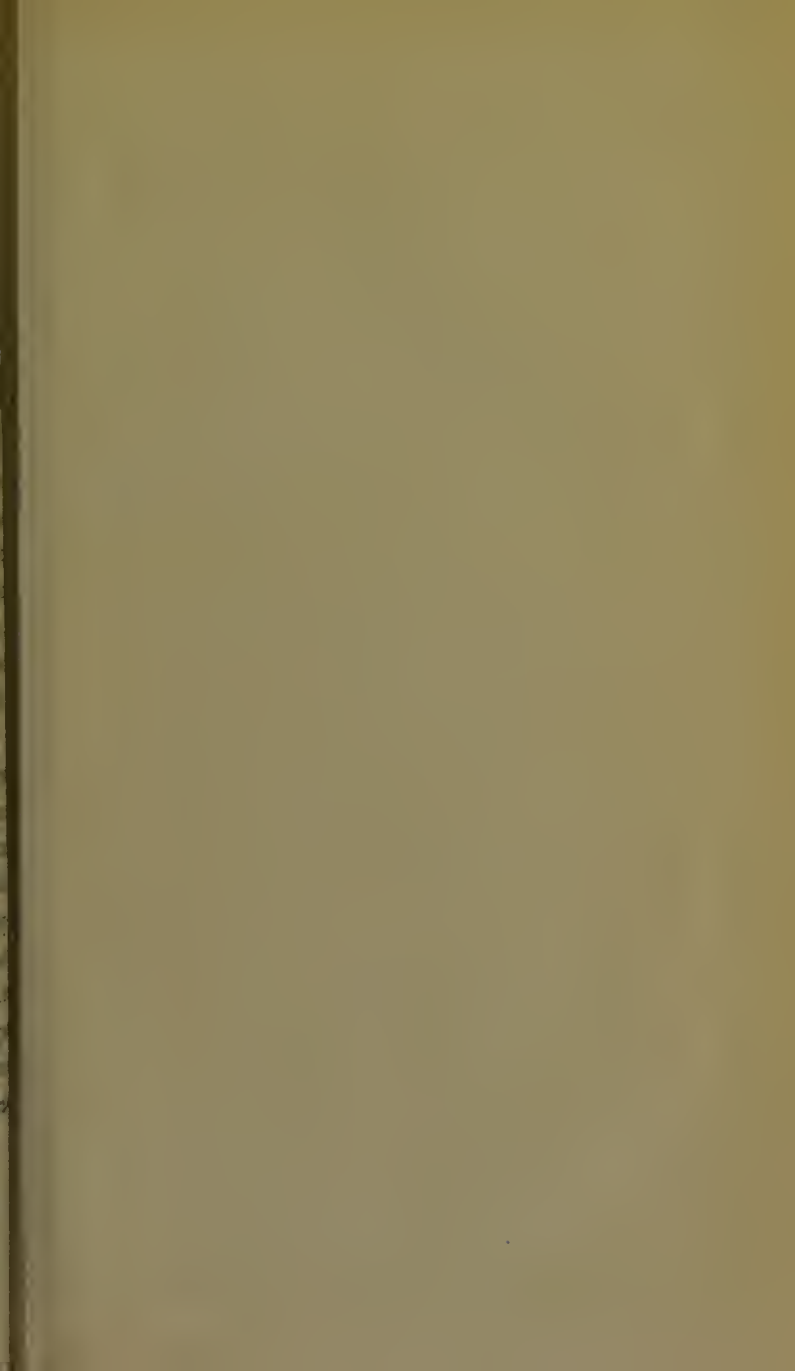
military surgeons and assistant surgeons being *permanently* attached to such institutions; the pay and allowance of said medical officers being higher than if they were attached to regiments, or enjoying any other staff appointments.

The advantages of having those medical appointments permanent cannot be too highly commended, nor is it in this paper necessary to point these out, since they are apparent to all medical officers, and must arrest the attention of even non-medical observers.

The working of a system somewhat similar to the above may be seen from the following figures gathered at the Siflicomio of Naples:—The percentage of disease had in the course of three years come down from 50 to 30. In 1861, 75 per cent. of patients were affected with chancres whereas now there were only 29 per cent. The number of registered prostitutes in the first quarter of 1861 was 413 whereas in the last quarter of 1863 it was 1,475.

We would commend all Lock Hospitals to the earnest support of Government, feeling assured that they are one of the great means for combating this terrible disease and for ameliorating the horrible conditions dependent upon it we commend them, confident that money expended in supporting them and in every other effort for the arrestment of this pestilence is laid out to the best advantage of the State at large, as well as of many individually, and is put out to the highest possible interest, as the health returns of our soldiers and of our working classes would demonstrate at no very distant period.

69 Bessboro' Street, South Belgravia,  
June, 1864.







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